

THE BLUEPRINT

A NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

Winter 2003

FROM THE "ACTING" DIRECTOR

By Fady Mattar

As we celebrate the holiday season and the coming of the New Year, it is a pleasant task to reiterate the happenings of last year and reflect on the accomplishments achieved by you all.

During 2003, the Department experienced its heaviest workload ever due to the extremely busy construction industry sector. As we look around, new buildings are sprouting throughout the City, especially along the ocean near downtown Long Beach. Beautiful residential high rise buildings are in various stages of construction along Ocean Boulevard. The "Pike at Rainbow Harbor" project is developing into a very classy tourist attraction where local residents and out-of-towners alike can enjoy a nice dinner, a movie or a visit to the Aquarium for a glimpse of the exotic marine life displayed there. Soon, elegant nightclubs and family entertainment businesses will be completed to provide for a variety of fun-filled times and shopping opportunities. This is in addition to the almost completed City-Place development that provides a vast variety of shopping opportunities,

and high-end residential units located directly above boutique-style shops emulating European-type developments.

Furthermore, numerous projects are in various stages of development. Some are in the conceptual design stage while others are on the verge of obtaining their construction permits. To name a few, the D'Orsay hotel proposed on the Promenade is very close to obtaining permits to begin construction. High-rise residential condominiums on Ocean and Pine at the old Jergins Trust site and a twin high-rise complex at Chestnut and Ocean have obtained their entitlement and are in the construction plans design phase. The "West Gateway" project, four square blocks of mixed use construction along Broadway near City Hall, is in the process of preparing the environmental documents to begin the formal process of obtaining entitlement. To top it off, the PacificCenter project is coming down the pipeline, 260 acres of prime land owned by Boeing to be developed into a residential/retail/commercial/industrial complex. This is a project that can keep us busy for a decade. Although the applicant is still negotiating with the City for

a development agreement, I expect that they will reach an agreement soon and begin the entitlement process.

If we compare this last year's construction valuation, which is an indicator of the volume and complexity of projects that we have plan checked, inspected or otherwise managed, to just three years ago, we find that it has more than doubled (\$411 million as compared to \$192 million). The number of plan checks and inspections has risen by a whopping 25%. The number of residential units built has climbed to ten times that of just four years ago. This substantial increase in workload was met head-on by all of you; planners, plan checkers, inspectors, clerical staff and managers, without any significant increase in the workforce.

Actually, we had more challenges this last year than we can shake a stick at. We have had almost a 100% turnover in our building plan checkers, with a young, but eager-to-learn staff that has done a tremendous job of meeting the exceptional challenge, with a little help from our retirees. We have also had a 100% turnover in the

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

This newsletter is published by the City of Long Beach Planning and Building Department as a forum for developments, issues, and City policies that may affect Long Beach.

The Department of Planning and Building is dedicated to assisting citizens of Long Beach.

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FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR

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Planning Bureau managers and 50% in our Building Bureau managers. We have had a significant decrease in our Department managers from 9 to 6, with a decrease in the support staff for the front office from 4 to 2-1/2. We have had substantial reductions in our code enforcement staff, whether weed abatement or zoning code enforcement sections, and unfortunately, with more to come next year.

Through the innovative use of contract employees, retirees, overtime, and the tremendous extra efforts by all of you, we were able to meet these seemingly insurmountable challenges without even a significant decrease in response time or quality of work. No words could properly describe my appreciation for your outstanding efforts or the feeling of pride in belonging to such a great team.

As we look back to these accomplishments and feel proud of these achievements, we must be prepared for the upcoming year's even more difficult challenges. We must continue to work hard to meet the heavy workload and ensure that we are prepared to assist the building industry in completing these important projects in a timely manner. We must also be prepared to face the budget cuts that our Department will undergo, along with our City family, so we can collectively eliminate the projected budget deficit in FY05.

This year, our City Manager has requested the involvement of employees at all levels in the FY05 budget process. In response to his wishes, the Department has initiated a process whereby everyone will participate. Upon receipt of the FY05 budget impacts on the Department from the Budget Office, a kickoff meeting with all Department employees will be conducted

to describe the proposed process. The regularly scheduled staff meetings in the various divisions and units of the Department will be utilized. A standing agenda item for these meetings will be a discussion of the budget, at which point staff can ask questions, submit comments and propose reduction scenarios. All questions, comments and suggestions will be brought back to a steering committee made up of Department managers. Proposals will be examined for their effect on the Department's core services and evaluated for possible effect on State mandated functions and revenue-producing services, and for all other possible impacts. The final proposal will then be returned to staff, accompanied by detailed explanation of the reasons for rejecting any proposal or suggestion. Staff will then be asked to concur with the final proposal or provide amendments and forward the package back to the steering committee, who will then prepare the final Department proposal and forward it to the Budget Office.

Although we were able to completely absorb this year's budget cuts without anyone losing his/her job, the challenges for this upcoming year's cuts are more difficult. With your help and heavy involvement, we should be able to implement these cutbacks with minimum impact on the Department's services and employees.

I wanted to go on and mention some of the fun things that we did last year, such as Halloween, the Holiday Breakfast and the retirement celebrations, but I will keep these until next time as the article is already too long.

I wish you a very happy 2004. I am optimistic that we will work through these challenges together and will have another very successful and productive year.

NEW TRENDS IN CODE ENFORCEMENT

**By Mark Sutton,
Building Inspection Officer**

Code Enforcement means many things to many people. Some view Code Enforcement as the application of building codes to new construction projects, others look at Code Enforcement as a way to get trash and debris removed from private property, and still others view Code Enforcement as a way to identify substandard and vacant buildings and either rehabilitate them or have them demolished.

In effect, all of these views are correct.

In the City of Long Beach, Code Enforcement activities are associated with the maintenance of private property in an effort to preserve the neighborhoods, property values and the quality of life for our citizens. This effort also places a priority on the mitigation of hazardous conditions, which pose an immediate threat to life and limb.

Over the many years that the City of Long Beach has been involved in the Code Enforcement effort, the City has always been the leader in developing and implementing new programs that address the ever-changing needs of our community. The most recent community-based program that is being implemented in a few select areas, is the Community Code Enforcement Program (CCE).

The Community Code Enforcement Program is a community-based program that involves community leaders, City Council staff, Code Enforcement personnel from various City departments and other agencies. This program is flexible in nature and allows for "customizing" enforcement actions to fit the needs of a specific neighborhood.

During the start-up period, the Community Code Enforcement staff meets with the Councilmember and their staff for the district in which a project area is proposed. After consulting with the Councilmember, a target area is chosen and discussions are initiated with community leaders who would like to participate in the program. A Community Code Enforcement Team is established and meetings begin with the community to identify the needs of the community. For example, having the Community Code Enforcement personnel survey an area and cite all violations at the on-set of the program may be an appropriate strategy for one neighborhood. However, in another neighborhood community leaders may wish to try an educational approach by meeting with the owners/tenants in the area, explaining the program and requesting that noted violations be corrected, rather than having official notices sent.

The participation of the community leaders is an essential component of the program. Their commitment to investing their time and effort to stabilize and enhance their community is vital. This is done in many different ways. The leaders in one neighborhood may decide to take responsibility for a specific block of properties, talk to the owners and residents, inform them of the program and suggest ways to resolve various problems. However, leaders in another neighborhood may survey their designated area and decide that referral of violations and/or problems to City staff is the more appropriate response. Flyers will be developed for each project area to be distributed to the owners/residents of a specific property by the community leaders. These flyers will explain the purpose of the program, how it will be administered, what the expectations are

of the community, and what types of problems were noted at specific sites.

Another key element to the Community Code Enforcement Program is the single point of contact. A building inspector is assigned to the specified target area and has the ability to work flexible hours thus, allowing the inspector to be in the community when they are most needed. It is the inspector's responsibility to follow up on all complaints received, including those normally referred to other agencies. The inspector will coordinate any efforts needed to abate problems, participate in community based activities, report back to the community at the monthly meetings on the progress of Code Enforcement activities, and "walk" the area in an effort to maintain an open line of communication with the residents.

The Community Code Enforcement concept is a non-traditional approach to resolving community problems and with our continuing experience with this program, it appears that this approach may be the way Code Enforcement is implemented in the future.

The Department of Planning and Building currently has four Community Code Enforcement Teams in various stages of implementation.

The original CCE Program, which was introduced to us through then Councilmember Alan Lowenthal and now State Assemblymember Lowenthal, started in the 2nd District as a pilot program. Councilmember Baker and his staff have assisted in the continued success of the Rose Park program. Further expansion of the CCE concept has included the Alamitos

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GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Community Cluster Meetings Begin By Pat Garrow, Senior Planner

On Wednesday, January 7, 2004, the City of Long Beach began holding General Plan Update meetings with neighborhood members on the topics of Land Use and Mobility. The first meeting was held at the Houghton Park Recreation Center. Nearly twenty Community Cluster Advisory Committee Representatives came to take seats on this all-volunteer, citizen's advisory panel. Staff is grateful to these noble neighbors who care enough to get involved in planning for our future!

An on-going series of Community Cluster Meetings will continue in each of the five community cluster areas (north, west central, southwest, southeast and eastside) around the City, generally on Wednesday nights throughout January and February. The first meeting will introduce the reasons for updating the General Plan, discuss the responsibilities of the Community Cluster Advisory Committee Members, and involve a 90-minute interactive exercise where the staff begins to explore with Committee Members the land use and transportation issues in each cluster. (Both staff and the Committee Members enjoyed this!)

The second meeting will be a briefing on pertinent land use, and socio-

economic and transportation data. A discussion on the implications of this data for future physical planning of the City will begin. The third meeting will explore alternative future land use and transportation scenarios for the City, as well as for each Community Cluster. At the fourth meeting Cluster Members will draft land use and mobility policies and select their preferred land use and transportation scenario for the future. At the final meetings the groups will check this scenario against the real world and market realities, as well as the vision for the *entire* City, and make their final Community Cluster Advisory Committee Member recommendations.

This, of course, is if all goes as smoothly as planned! Remember, planning is considered both an art and a science. The process is pretty clearly defined by the desired outcome; a long-range direction for future land use and transportation in Long Beach. However long-range planning is, nevertheless, by its very nature, a very complex topic to address.

Single-family residential land owners may not want to see more density in their neighborhoods, yet struggling working families may desire more, and more affordable housing. Everyone deplores the thought of longer commutes and more traffic congestion, but how many of us are willing to give up our single-

passenger vehicles and carpool or take the bus? We all want a good paying job, as close as possible to our residence, but how much more commercial and industrial business-related traffic will we tolerate?

Compromise and balance need to be sought in a land use plan that works for the interests of *most* Long Beach residents. Democracy is the American way. That is why the process by which this planning effort proceeds is very important to the Planning Bureau. There is an art to listening to what the public has to say, and a science to correctly interpreting that input. There is a science involved in gathering the needed background data to make the public aware of pressing land use and mobility concerns in the City and the region; and there is an art in displaying this data and helping the public understand its implications. The plan itself will represent a compromise – both art and science, perhaps between that which works best for individual areas around the City and that which works best for the City as a whole.

Staff is looking forward to meeting the challenge of helping Long Beach citizens devise the “best darn land use and mobility plans” we possibly can. Our future depends on it!

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Beach neighborhood and a portion of the St. Anthony/East Village neighborhood.

The second CCE area resides in the 1st District and encompasses the Willmore, WECA and a portion of the St. Anthony/East Village neighborhoods. Councilmember Bonnie Lowenthal and her staff continue to work with the Community Code Enforcement team to abate problems in their neighborhoods. The third CCE area has been

designated in the 7th District and currently the Arlington, Wrigley and Stephens neighborhoods participate in the CCE program. After meeting with Councilmember Uranga and her staff; it was determined to start the program in the Silverado Park neighborhood. A kick-off meeting was held, Team Captains signed up to participate and the first regular meeting has been scheduled. The Silverado Park CCE area is bounded by 31st Street to Willow and Santa Fe Avenue to Delta Avenue. Staff and the community are looking forward to working in this area.

The fourth CCE area has been designated in the 9th District. In conjunction with Councilmember Lerch and his staff, the CCE program now includes the Hamilton, Coolidge, De Forest and Grant/Houghton neighborhoods. Future expansion is anticipated in this area.

Our hope is to expand the Community Code Enforcement program into other areas of the City as additional funding becomes available.

PERSONNEL NEWS

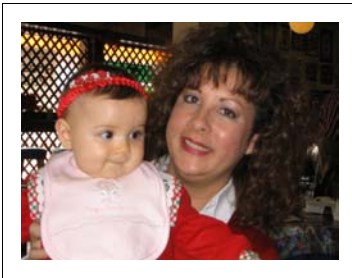


Josephine Peterson, Clerk Typist III, Congratulations on your new Bundle of Joy

Josephine and Kevin Peterson, proud coaches, welcomed Tori Ellen, their Hole-in-One who turned pro in the summer of 2003, with a handicap of 6-pounds 6-ounces, and a score of 19-inches. Tori Ellen is named after Josephine's Mother, Victoria, and Kevin's Grandma, Ellen. Grandma Victoria is so in love with her granddaughter; if Kevin and Josephine would let her have Tori Ellen 24/7 she would jump at the chance. Great-Grandma Ellen is extremely proud of her namesake that she has already shown Tori Ellen's pictures all over Green Bay, Wisconsin. Tori Ellen loves to listen to the swingin' jazz music of Frank Sinatra and Michael Bubl . In addition, Tori has been introduced to the world of Karaoke by her Grandpa Joe, and she is loving every minute of it, like mother like daughter.

Willie Miranda, Administrative Officer , New Grandpa to TWINS!

Willie Miranda, Administrative Officer in Planning and Building, together with his wife Marlie, Accounting Officer in Financial Management, welcomed their first grandchildren (identical twin girls) last September 4, 2003. Cayman Alexis and Ryann Catherine were born at Cedars Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles to proud parents Anna (Willie and Marlie's daughter) and Anthony Newcombe. At birth, Cayman was 3 lbs., 13 oz. and Ryann was 4 lbs., 8 oz. Both were 17 inches. This first Christmas picture was taken at 3 months, and they are now 11 and 12 lbs. respectively. Both grandfather and grandmother are still having a hard time identifying who is who ... just look at the picture and you can see why.



Mona Knopp, Combination Building Inspector, Resigns

Mona Knopp recently resigned from the City to fill a very important position; Mom to her, and husband Ron's, newborn baby girl, Hannah. Since she began working for the Department in 1979, Mona has held the positions of Clerk Typist, Combination Building Inspector Aide and Combination Building Inspector. Mona has worked at the front counter, the weed abatement/property maintenance unit, substandard buildings and more recently in the Community Code Enforcement program. No matter what the assignment, Mona would give it 110%. Always a conscientious and caring member of the Department,

Mona's diligent efforts (and habit of bringing in tasty treats to the office!) will be greatly missed. Our best wishes to Mona and her family!

Beverly Glover, Combination Building Inspector, Moves to City Hall East

Beverly Glover has moved over to Community Code Enforcement and is now working out of City Hall East. Beverly recently filled the vacancy left open by the resignation of Mona Knopp. She will be working with the property owners, residents, staff and City Council in the Community Code Enforcement Program located in North Long Beach. Beverly is a welcome addition to City Hall East and the Community Code Enforcement Team!



Senior Planner Carolyn Bihn's Son, Nick, returns from tour of duty in Iraq

PFC Nick Bihn arrived home on leave December 21st after 11 months in the Middle East with the U. S. Army 54th Engineer Battalion. The 54th was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division and his unit, *Charlie Company*, was with the 3-7th Cavalry, the "tip of the spear", in the March invasion. Nick drove an armored vehicle launch bridge for 24 hours straight the first day of the war and he said he was most afraid when he was crossing the berm into Iraq that first night, not knowing what they would face. Charlie Company were among the first to arrive at Baghdad Airport, knock down doors in a huge weapons factory, and walk through Abu Ghraib Prison. Nick stayed at Saddam's palace compound at the

airport and Uday's Palace in Tikrit, as well as many other much less desirable locations. Back home, he couldn't get the smile of relief off his face for days. Nick left for Bamberg, Germany where he was stationed on January 15. His parting words to his mother when she saw him off at LAX were, "Don't worry, I'll come home again someday".

PERSONNEL NEWS



Dick McNicholl, Chief Building Inspector, Retires

Congratulations to Dick McNicholl on his recent retirement. To help Dick celebrate his 28 years of service to the City, a get-together was held on December 6th. Dick and his family, friends and co-workers were treated to an evening of good food and noteworthy entertainment. Staff prepared a great home-cooked barbeque dinner and Pete Ronca emceed the evening's presentation. Performances such as Little Red Riding Hood, the CE Jig, the Irish Bar Songs, the CT4 Buttercup and the CE Shuffle were crowd pleasers. Presentations were made by the Fire Department, the City Attorney's office and the Grand Prix Association (Dick received a

lifetime entry pass to the Grand Prix and a really cool jacket!) Seen at the party were many former employees including Gene Zeller, Bob Stump, Dick Whipple, Willard Wilson, Clark Searle, Ray Liddicoat, Karen DeAngelis, Darlene Chludzinski, Larry Krupka, Alan Bisson, Barbara Decker, Bob Decker, Ben McVicker, Angie McGrath and Vince Olea. A great time was had by all. We wish Dick the best in his future adventures!

Ruthann Lehrer, Neighborhood Preservation Officer Retires

Ruthann retired in December 2003 after working 14 years with the City. She was hired in 1989 as the City's first Historic and Neighborhood Preservation Officer in the City Manager's Office. In the early 90's her position was transferred to the Department of Planning and Building. Her office is responsible for establishing the City's inventory of historic sites and districts. The office evaluates and recommends buildings and neighborhoods for landmark designation, and staffs the Cultural Heritage Commission. Ruthann received a B.A. degree from Radcliffe College (Magna Cum Laude), a M.A. in Art History from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University and a M.A. degree in Urban Planning from the UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning. Ruthann was very passionate about what she did for the City. During her tenure, the City designated 120 properties as historic landmarks and 16 historic neighborhoods. At retirement, Ruthann plans on pursuing her love of gardening, pottery-making, playing with her parrots, and of course traveling with her husband, Robert to exotic places around the world. Ruthann, we will miss you very much and we know you will be enjoying your retirement.



MacArthur Perkins, Senior Combination Building Inspector, Retires...Finally



Big Mac Daddy, as he is affectionately known, retired after more than 30 years of service with the City. Mac was born and raised in Long Beach and went to Millikan High School. He mentioned to all who would listen that it was his senior class at Millikan who chose the name of "El Dorado" Park for the City's biggest park on the east side of town. Mac began his career with the City of Long Beach in the carpentry shop at the Public Service Bureau. In the early 80s he transferred to the Department of Planning and Building as a Combination Building Inspector, and was later promoted to Senior Combination Building Inspector in 1988. His timely jokes and unique humor always helped lower the sometimes hectic atmo-

sphere at the permit counter on the 4th Floor. During his retirement, he plans to build an airplane, work on restoring several antique cars, building an aircraft hangar, install an irrigation system for fruit trees and build a landing strip on the 15 acres he owns and lives on with his wife Dede, located on the southwest corner of Pearblossom Highway in the City of Little Rock, California. Mac, we will definitely miss you.

PERSONNEL NEWS

Jamilla Vollmann, Planner



Even though Jamilla (Zha-mé-la) was born at the UCLA medical center, she only lived in the area for a week before her family relocated to the Navajo reservation in Window Rock, Arizona. After three years, the Vollmann family moved to the Washington, D.C. area where Jamilla spent the rest of her childhood. Craving the California lifestyle, Jamilla moved to Santa Cruz to attend the University of California. Her junior year was spent abroad at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England, studying architecture and environmental studies. After earning a B.A. in Environmental Studies from UCSC, she worked as a planning assistant for SGA Environmental Land Use Planning in the Santa Cruz area. This experience introduced her to many architects and designers that provided the foundation for a career

in architecture and design. Jamilla became specialized in 3D architectural computer modeling and became self-employed as a drafter and designer. After years of enjoying the Santa Cruz beaches Jamilla desired the excitement of living in the city. She relocated to San Francisco where she took a junior architect position with Architecture and Light, a firm specializing in design of high end residential and retail projects. In an attempt to preserve and enhance the character of San Francisco's neighborhoods Jamilla became a city planner in the San Francisco Planning Department. Jamilla is currently enjoying getting reacquainted with Southern California as a project planner in Long Beach.

Derek Burnham, Contract Planner

Derek originally hails from Detroit, Michigan, but spent most of his formative years in the western states of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. He attended Carroll College in Helena, Montana, where he majored in sociology. Upon graduation from Carroll, Derek began working as a Team Leader for Aspen Youth Alternatives, a juvenile correctional facility in Boulder, Montana. Rather than lock the juveniles away, this facility sought to help the juveniles by teaching them wilderness survival skills, which were learned by hiking and camping for 60 days in the Montana wilderness. After a year of spending 96 hours per week with teenagers, Derek opted to pursue graduate studies in urban planning. Seeking a more urban environment in which to study planning, he chose to attend USC. Upon hearing the news of his acceptance to USC, Derek promptly boarded a Greyhound bus and arrived in Los Angeles—36 hours later. While adjusting to the culture shock of relocating from Montana, Derek completed a Masters Degree in Urban Planning, with a specialization in economic development. After a one-year internship at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, he began working full-time for Cotton/Bridges/Associates (CBA), an urban planning and environmental consulting firm in Pasadena. While at CBA, Derek prepared housing elements, environmental impact reports, and other special studies for several jurisdictions throughout the State. Outside of planning, Derek's interests include sports (particularly baseball), cooking, and nearly any outdoor activity that allows him to enjoy the pleasant California weather, including hiking, biking, recreational sports, or simply walking around a city or along the beach.



Department Holiday Breakfast—December 5th



The Holiday Breakfast was another great success. Among some of the highlights were the awards for Customer Service, better known as Employee of the Year, awarded to Kathy Bangma, Payroll/Personnel Assistant for the Department and Anita Garcia, Community Planner. Once again, there was a large turn-out of retirees, and families of the employees. The breakfast prepared and served by Planning and Building supervisors was a great success.

ANNUAL HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST WINNERS!

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31ST



**1st Place—Sonny & Cher
Beverly Glover &
Valerie Decker**



**2nd Place—Fady's Angels
Kathy Brown, Kellee
Bennett & Kathy Bangma**



**3rd Place—Bones the Skeleton
Mike Duerr**



2003 Halloween Contestants



In Loving Memory of Kellee Murchison-Bennett, Administrative Analyst

The family of the Department of Planning and Building mourns the devastating loss of one of its employees. On January 7, 2004, a young, bright and valued member of its staff passed away suddenly. Kellee Murchison-Bennett, Administrative Analyst III, experienced what appears to be a massive heart attack. She was diligently working at her desk on the 4th floor of City Hall when she suddenly lost consciousness. The Paramedics were called and responded within minutes, but alas, even after their valiant efforts to revive her at the office and later at St. Mary's Hospital, they were unsuccessful.

Kellee was well liked and respected by everyone she worked with over the last 13 years of service with the City of Long Beach. She worked for the Police Department, the Department of Public Works and more recently with the Department of Planning and Building. She was working part-time in an effort to balance her career with her duties to her family; husband, Tommy, and her two young sons, Tyler, age 7, and Tanner, age 4.

Although she worked part-time assisting the Department's Administrative Officer, Willie Miranda, the volume of work she produced was almost equivalent to that of a full-time employee. Kellee helped the Department with multitudes of duties. She did them all accurately, efficiently and with a smile. She assisted with the annual budget preparation and the daily financial matters of the Department. She also managed a substantial State grant for the Department's Code Enforcement program. Kellee never hesitated to help in any way she could with other matters, especially with computer related problems that she was well versed in.

May God rest her soul, and help us and her family during these very difficult times. We will all miss Kellee; her memory will not be forgotten.